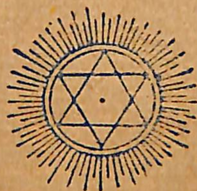
Sādhana Sāmrājyam

(SOVEREIGN SWAY OF SADHANA)

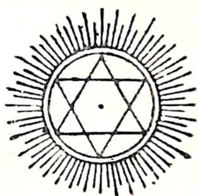
With English translation and gloss by M. P. Pandit



T. V. KAPALI SASTRY

SADHANA SAMRAJYAM

(Sovereign Sway of Sādhana)



T. V. KAPALI SASTRY

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

YEARS ago when I thought of taking up Philosophy as my subject for University studies I consulted and sought the advice of the Author of the present work, Sri T.V. Kapali Sastriar. He suggested to me not to choose the "idler's resort" and added that true philosophy is not learnt in class-rooms or from text-books. I was taken aback as I had thought Philosophy to be an indispensable guide for spiritual life. I did not imagine then that it has as much or as little to do with the inner life as any other subject of the Humanities. For the distinction between philosophy and spiritual life is very real; the one is a living out of the deeper verities of the soul while the other is largely mental speculation on the nature of the ultimate Reality. Philosophy is thus mainly a province of the mind whereas the life of the spirit immediately concerns the inmost being or as in the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, the whole being of man with the soul as its centre. A clear understanding of this position is necessary for a useful study of this poem which is more a testament of the Yogin in the Poet than a discourse by the philosopher.

Formed in *śikhariṇī* metre, this work of twenty-five verses celebrates the Sadhana, spiritual discipline, in

its sovereign sway over the seeker who has dedicated himself to the Truth of a higher life. Though it deals particularly with the Sadhana that is the central feature of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, it applies in a large manner to all Sadhanas whose aim is to discover the true Self or God within and thus rise out of the lower life of ignorance into the felicities of the higher realms of the Spirit.

The Author makes it clear at the outset that entry into Sadhana does not lie in the thinkings of the mind. The mind of man will always go on circling in its whirl of speculations over the Problem of Existence without bringing him any nearer the solution. At the end of its labours he is left where he was, as far removed from the core of the Riddle as ever. (Verses 1-5)

It is indispensable that the seeker should get back from the running course of the restless mind into the Quiet that remains at the back of it. (6-8)

Meditation over the Lord is the easiest means of withdrawing from the customary preoccupations of the mind and relaxing oneself into the Quiet. (9)

But there must be a sincere recognition of the fact of Rulership of the Divine over All and a practical surrender of one's little self to Him. (10)

It is only then, when the ego-bound self of man sheds its coverings and narrow enclosures and the barriers thus break down that his being opens into a profound silence: one begins to see and feel the world as a sacred habitation of the Lord. (11-12)

There are three indubitable results which are palpably seen once the touch of the Divine is active in one who has rendered himself receptive to it by an utter self-offering. They are a settled quiet in the mind, a flaming aspiration in the heart and a sense of the Vast governing the look and thought of the outward intelligence. (13)

These are not the outcome of human labour. Human effort can achieve certain results undoubtedly, but the aim and goal of this Sadhana which is to effect a complete conquest of the dense matter by the light of the Divine is not realisable except by the compassionate glance, *kaṭākṣa*, of the Lord of the Yoga. A wakeful Peace and a processing Power are its active agents. (14-15)

The consciousness of the Vast overpowers the being now freed from the encumbrances of the revolving mind which has settled down to its pristine poise of a clear, transparent, reflecting mirror. (16)

This is the dawn of the Yogic consciousness in the wake of which the seeker becomes aware of a happy freshness in the mode and manner of interaction between his subjective being and the objective environment. (17-18)

With this progressive opening of the inner regions of the being to the action of the Yoga Force, there commences the music of the spheres which wells up from the profounds of the enveloping silence; the light of the Power at play begins to reveal itself more and more openly. (19)

The Higher Consciousness which is unrolling itself in him stamps his being with its innate nature of infinitude and it is with effort that he has to adjust his movements to suit the demands of Time, Space and the Many around him that characterise the world of his living. (20)

To such a chosen soul is revealed by the Master of the Yoga the way to establish the Kingdom of the Immortal here in mortal man on earth; by him also is the most retiring disposition transformed into a consummate capacity and readiness for manifold work, for the world's weal. (21)

The Sadhaka of this Yoga does not decide his steps of his own accord except that he makes a determined choice of the Sadhana. It is the Yoga Shakti of the Lord that takes possession of him and works out the Sadhana, the only condition demanded of him being a vigilant receptivity to it and to her alone. (22)

The decisive turn however is reached when the seeker is vouchsafed a constant *sānnidhya*, the Presence of the Guiding Spirit and the larger Peace overpowers and begins to take shape in the body rendering it into a beauteous pedastal like a marble monument. (23-24)

It is the Master of this Yoga, Sri Aurobindo, in whom it lies to effect this glorious fulfilment of Man; to him who secures the execution of this Purpose entrusted to the glance, *kaṭākṣa* of the Shakti, the Mother, let us bow in gratitude, concludes the author. (25)

Ever since I read this work, in 1947 when it saw the light of the day, and felt the ennobling grandeur and immediacy of appeal, it has been my earnest desire to make it accessible to others, to those who have an abiding interest in matters that pertain to the deeper being of man.

"Adequate rendering of poetry in any other language is never an easy task. It must be borne in mind that one can know the thought-content of a poem from translations. But that is not the same as understanding the poetry. True appreciation rises from allowing the soul and substance of poetry to invade and possess the sense, feeling and thought in the core of one's being in communion with the spirit of Poetry. (That is the *para-nirvṛti* mentioned by Sanskrit Rhetors.) Of the untranslatable elements in Poetry the word-rhythm and word-order stand pre-eminently as the two wings of the soaring soul of Poetic sound." These are the words of the Author, stated elsewhere, on the true character of Poetry. And Sanskrit poetry does not lend itself to an effective translation. Apart from the innate majesty of the language, it is quite impossible to communicate its sound-values in an alien tongue. The word, *śabda* has a power of its own and is as important as the meaning, *artha*. Naturally all that could be attempted here is to bring out as much of the *artha* as possible and not the soul of poetry which could be sensed only in the original. The translation has received the benefit of revision by the

revered Author, while the Gloss written for elucidation has been broadly approved and in many places revised by him. While preparing the notes I have freely drawn upon the Author's writings on the Upanishads, the Teachings etc. and have directly quoted from them where necessary, without giving reference, such passages being given in quotation marks.

This work, with translation and gloss, appeared serially in *The Advent* Quarterly of 1951.

M. P. PANDIT

साधनसाम्राज्यम्

or

SOVEREIGN SWAY OF SADHANA

तदेवेदं दृश्यं प्रकृतमथवाऽदृश्यमपि यत्
समस्तं सम्प्राहुश्चरमचरमप्यागमदृशः ।
कदासीदारम्भः परिणतिरपि क्वाऽस्य जगतः
कुतः कस्मिन्नेवं प्रथितमिह को वेद जनिमान् ।।१।।

1. That alone is all this that is commenced, visible and invisible, mobile and immobile, say the *seers* of the Scriptures. Of this world when was the beginning, where the end is, whence and wherein has it thus come to light—who knows that is born (of man)?

The wherefore and the whereat of the world around is a perennial question that confronts the awakened human intelligence. What is this world? Is it a reality or is it a fantastic dream of some superhuman gigantic Mind? Of what is it made, if made it has been?

The seers of the scriptures have answered this question with one voice. The seers are those who *see* the truth and give expression to it; they do not think it out; theirs are not the conclusions of intellectual reasonings regarding the possibilities of truth but perceptions of it. The Agama is an authentic utterance and originally stood for the entire literature invested with the imprimateur of authority and included the Vedas as well as the Tantra Shastra. Now, these scriptures which are recorded statements of the seeings of the seers declare that all this creation is the Supreme Reality itself—the Reality has been designated by the term *Tat* in the Vedas and the Upanishads, *tad ekam, tad brahma.* The Reality does not lend itself to definitions that limit in the very act of defining and hence has been cryptically designated as the That, *tat.* This creation is That. And creation is not merely the world that we see. There is not only the physical world which strikes the eye and the senses; there are behind and above it the world of thoughts, the world of feelings, and many more worlds not visible to the outward eye but certainly accessible to other faculties in man under appropriate conditions. Again, creation does not consist of mobile formations alone, it includes *acara,* the immobile also. Not only sentient and moving but all that is apparently insentient and immobile. We say 'apparently' because even the plant-kingdom which was commonly supposed to be devoid of life has been demonstrated by modern Science to be instinct with some life, thus confirming the perception of the ages-old statement of the Mahabharata or Manu that they have pain and pleasure

and are inwardly conscious, *antaḥ-samjñā bhavantyete sukha-duhkha-samanvitāḥ*. The creation in question is the present one that has begun and is progressing, *prakrita*, 'that is commenced'. Prakrita has many meanings in Sanskrit, but the one apposite in this context is 'this that has commenced'. It means the creation as we find it. For, according to both ancient and modern theories, Creation proceeds in cycles and many are the cycles past and many to follow suit.

Granted that what the seers say is so, the human mind proceeds to ask: when was its beginning? At what point of Time did creation start? How old is our world? And where is the end towards which it moves? Is the end here or elsewhere? Is it in calculable time or in some remote future? What is the location of its pre-natal existence? In what has it thus spread itself? No one born of the mother's womb (*janimān*), no mortal really knows answers to these questions. Not that it is impossible for man to gain solution to this riddle of existence; it simply means that the human mind, constituted as it is, is not capable of finding the full answer. It is the limitations of the mind that stand in the way of its finding a satisfactory answer to the question. More of it later on.

शिवस्साम्बः श्रीमान् हरिरिति च सच्चित्सुखवपुः
परं ब्रह्मेत्याहुर्जगदुदयभङ्गस्थितिकरम् ।
अमायी मायी वा भवतु परमात्मा स भगवान्
कथं भूयो भूयो जगदिदमनर्थं प्रकुरुताम् ॥२॥

2. The Agent of the world's rise and fall and stay is Shiva with the Mother (Shakti), Hari with Sri (his consort), the Supreme Brahman with Sat-chit-ananda Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, for body—thus they say (variously). Let that Lord, the Supreme Self, be with Maya or with no Maya; but how does he start this world, void of meaning (futile), again and again?

That this world is a willed creation of the Lord is a fundamental postulate of all theistic religions. It has not come to be out of a fortuitous Chance, nor does it continue by a mechanical necessity till it disappears into the recesses of time. It owes its birth, sustenance and dissolution to the supreme Creator who is called by different names according to the preference of the particular religious approach. Thus according to the adherents of the Shaiva religion, it is Shiva the Lord who is the agent of the birth of this world, not indeed alone but along with his consort the Mother, who is his Shakti. It is a basic tenet with Indian tradition, based upon an occult truth of primary nature, that no creation or manifestation is possible for the Lord, the Purusha, without his Shakti, the Executive Power, who receives the truth and substance of what is to be manifested from the Lord Purusha and proceeds to work out its expression backed by him. It is to be noted, however, that though from the standpoint of the uplooking intelligence, the Purusha and the Shakti are two different entities, from the higher and ulti-

mately the truer standpoint on their own level, both are one, a biune presentation of the same Truth. "Both the Lord and Shakti are the same Supreme Truth, but form a biune presentation of the Divine Being in the urge for Self-manifestation. In His Omnipotence with His eye turned towards Creation, He *sees* and finds His Manifestation in Her; whatever is manifested is His self-expression in Her; therefore to Him All is She. She, the Ishwari on Her side, holds in Her immensity the Creative Spirit, the Lord in His expressive poise and in Her All-conscious Power, She is filled with His Being; therefore to Her All is He. Thus is there a mutuality in their relation which recognises their absolute identity in the Supreme, while in the Creation and for it One is the complement to the Other. She holds and manifests Something of Him. With a stress on His expressive ray His gaze is held in Her and All to Him is His own manifestation worked out by Her; She manifests, He is manifested. Without Her there is no manifestation, without Him She has no existence. If to Him All is She, if to Her All is He, to the awakened human soul He is She and She is He."

Thus it is Shiva with his Shakti, known as Uma or Parvati who is the Agent. Or, in the Vaishnavic tradition, it is Hari with Sri, Lakshmi. Or it is the supreme Brahman the triple Sat-chit-ananda that is the source and substance and body of all, in the language of the Vedanta. Thus, it is the Lord who creates through the instrumentality of the Shakti which is called Maya by the Vedic mystics. Maya means something which measures out, *mimīte*, as

indeed it measures out the limitless and measureless from the substance of the body of the Lord. And in that sense it excels in skill, in cunning, in bringing out a manifestation that is limited out of a source and background that is limitless, finite out of the infinite. The Svetasvatara Upanishad unequivocally calls Maya the Prakriti of the Lord, *māyām tu prakṛtim vidyāt, māyinam tu maheśvaram*. It was a later development in the philosophical thought of the country that this Shakti, Maya came to be completely equated in the Vedanta with the feature of cunning and wholly invested with the property of causing illusion. Be that as it may, whether the Lord creates consorted by his Maya or creates all by himself, naturally a question arises: why does he create this world again and again? For to create presupposes a purpose, an issue. Nobody creates or works for anything without a definite purpose. The worlds rise and fall in a continuous procession; there does not seem to be any aim at all. That being so, why does he persist in creating again and again? Is there any set purpose behind the creation? Or is it that the Lord creates out of sheer helplessness compelled by something within or without himself? Or is it all a sport, a play with which he amuses himself?

न खेलन् नाखेलन् भुवनभवनस्थेमविलयै-
रुदास्ते यद्यात्मा किमु जडचितोस्तर्हि न भिदा ।
जगत्क्रीडारामो विसृजति हरन्नेवमिति चे-
न्निरर्थे किं कार्ये प्रभुरवतरेदर्भक इव ॥३॥

3. If neither in play nor not in play with the world's birth, duration and death the Atman, the Self stays aloof, is there then no difference between the insentient and sentient? If finding joy in the world-play he releases (creates) even as he breaks, does the Lord come down like a child for an act that is vain?

Not so, say some Vedantins. He, the Self, the Atman does not take part in the play, he is not involved in it. Adapting the position taken up by the Sankhyas and equating the Purusha with the Atman they hold that the Atman does not participate in the movement of the universe which is being worked out by the Prakriti. The Atman simply watches the diverse activities manifested by her. He does not play, if play it can be called. But the Atman cannot be divested of any part whatsoever in the act. For the Prakriti gets moving and effecting only at the express assent of the Purusha and goes on acting and doing under his observing eye. The act of observation, while it is not tantamount to active identification, is itself the impelling urge; for once the Purusha withdraws his observing eye, activity flags and Prakriti ceases to function for long. Thus this original assent and subsequent observation-participation precludes any complete dissociation with the play of creation on the part of the Self. So, the Self is neither in the play nor out of it: its position is one of aloofness, of indifference. If in fact such is the nature of the Self

of the world, a question arises: what then is the difference between a sentient thing, such as the Atman is understood to be and the insentient? For the insentient is absolutely aloof from active participation in the life around. It stands all contacts and absence of contacts with a severe aloofness, indifference. If such also is the nature of the Atman, whom we are taught to believe as the very source of sentience, consciousness, then verily there could be no distinction between the two.

Or perhaps, it may be urged that the Lord takes delight in this play, *līlā*, of the birth, duration and death of the world. He creates out of his own being, creates in delight and for the delight of a completer enjoyment of his own power. He takes equal delight in bringing the world to light, in maintaining it and in withdrawing it when it pleases him. Even when he breaks it up, he creates another out of his limitless possibilities. The entire creation is a Brindavan of Lord Krishna. That is the tenet of certain religious teachings. The mind understands this viewpoint to a certain extent but refuses to believe that such tremendous labour as the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe involves would be undertaken just for the joy of it without any pragmatic consideration from which it is accustomed to appreciate things of the world. The only analogy it can find is the activity of an infant who is ever busy making and breaking things with no aim except the amusement he derives from it. Would the all-knowing supreme Lord really come down and engage himself like a child in this gigantic activity which has apparently no aim as it supposes?

स एकः सम्पूर्णो न भवति ततोऽन्यत् किमपि चेत्
कथं नानाभावः पुरत उपतिष्ठेच्च परितः।
अखण्डप्रज्ञोऽसौ न भवति ततोऽज्ञं किमपि चेत्
कथङ्कारं ब्रूमो जडगति महान्धं जगदिदम् ।।४।।

4. If He is the One and Full and there is nothing else, how then does the Many confront (us) all around? If his knowledge is indivisible (infinite) and nothing from him comes to be that is unaware, how are we to speak of this world that is matter in motion, highly blind?

The Vedantin holds that the Supreme is One. All is He. He is Full, *pūrṇa*, he contains everything in himself; there is nothing outside of him, for to him there is no outside and inside; all is his extension. There is one Reality and all is reducible to that One. If this Oneness and entireness are the inseparable attributes of Him, how does it come about, asks the human mind, that we see around us so many differences and differing formations? How do the Many characterise the creation which is said to be the One Brahman, *sarvam khalu idam brahma*? The Many is the antithesis of the One and both cannot exist side by side. Yet, the Many is a fact, much more verifiable and patent to man than the Unity of the One. Pluralism carries with it a more convincing certitude than does Monism to the common mind. Or could it be that the Supreme is not really full

and it excludes the Many from its being? Again it is held that His knowledge is indivisible. His is a Consciousness that is one and infinite. It comprehends all that exists. It is all-knowing. If that be so, necessarily all that comes to be from him, all that is manifested out of him ought to partake of this nature of his consciousness since consciousness is indivisible and every bit that proceeds from the Being has inherent in it this consciousness which is self-aware. But the facts do not seem to correspond to this proposition. For the world in which we live and move is one vast mass in motion. Knowledge and awareness are the least part of its features. Organised as it is in physical matter, which is utterly devoid of self-awareness, it is constantly in a somnambulist whirl, moving towards where it knows not. It acts as one blind. The Energy which is the driving force behind is a mechanical, unintelligent something and it is this that has impressed itself on the major part of the creation and not the characteristic of self-awareness and knowledge which is the inalienable mark of the Infinite Consciousness-Being from which it is deduced to have manifested. Not knowledge but ignorance, not a guiding Intelligence but the Mechanical Laws of Necessity would thus seem to govern the existence of this world.

अथैको भूतानां भुवनजनिकर्ता स भगवान्
स्वयं सर्वो जातो निरवधिकचिन्मोद इति चेत् ।
स्वरूपे नीरूपे प्रभवितुरखण्डे च गहने
कथं सम्मोहो वा कथमिव च शोकोऽन्तरमियात्॥५॥

5. If the Sole Lord of the beings, the author of the world's birth, has himself with his boundless knowledge and joy become the All, how then does delusion, how does grief get space in the mighty Lord's Being that is formless, indivisible, impenetrable?

If it is maintained that the Supreme Lord of all beings and the creator of the worlds is not an extra-cosmic Deity but is himself all this, has created all this out of his own boundless existence, in a word, is immanent in it, there is another difficulty. The Becoming must necessarily partake of the nature of the Being of which it is but a particular movement. The Supreme Being is intense consciousness, is limitless knowledge, is boundless delight. But do we find these everywhere in creation which is said to be a form of the same Being? We do not. On the other hand, what we find is delusion mostly instead of knowledge, grief frequently instead of delight. This world of forms has proceeded out of the utter formless state of the Being, a state that is at once indivisible and impenetrable, since it is one and self-charged. How then could delusion and grief find entry into it? Obviously, a contradiction. For they are not an aftermath of the birth of the world. They seem to have been born as its inseparable adjuncts and must have entered into the creative movement, coeval with the manifestation of material embodiments of living and feeling and thinking.

अमीभिस्सन्देहैः शिथिलितवपुर्वेदनजडं
मनो यन्मन्दानां चरति मृगवद् गाधचरितम् ।
तदेवंवादानामनवधिकधीविभ्रमजुषां
प्ररोहान् पर्णानामयुतमिव पश्यन्ति सुधियः ॥६॥

6. The mind of the dull, with these doubts (afflicted), loosened in its frame, insensitive to (truer) feeling, grazes like the antelope (or animal) on the surface. The Wise regard these talks that embrace unbounded the fanciful revolutions of the mind as thousands of leaves that sprout (on the tree).

Such are the many doubts that afflict the human mind which has not yet outgrown its infancy. Such a mind always loves to flit from object to object, skimming on the surface of everything and exhausts itself in the process without a corresponding substantial gain. In the end it gets bewildered, chaotic and loses the sense of direction and lands on the arid sands of agnosticism. It is ever busy with its own rounds of arguments and counter-arguments which never end. For it is the very nature of the gross human mind which indulges in this pastime to see things piecemeal, to form its own notions on that slender basis, erect theories or formulations of its apprehension of the part as if it were the whole. And when, as is bound to happen, the mind stumbles upon other data which contradict its initial speculations, it proceeds to demolish the old and build up a new

theory in its place. Needless to say, the 'new' also follows the way of the old. That has been the story of the superficial mind of man everywhere; there is no end to its peregrinations which are likened by the wise to the never-ending sprouts of leaves on the branches of a tree. The leaves may be removed, yet they spring up again and again. So do the fanciful imaginations and doubts of the mind go on repeating themselves however much you may meet and answer them. Such a mind gets weakened in its constitution; the ceaseless and intense activity of this kind eats into the very vitals of the mental organ and renders it rickety just as purposeless and unorganised activity of the body tends to exhaust it. It becomes dry and loses savour. For it loses contact with all higher and truer feeling, all sensitivity to higher values of the soul and heart, which are truly what warm up the whole being. Shorn of this touch the mind becomes matter-of-fact, dry, mechanical and man is the loser.

किमस्मादस्माभिर्विमतिभिरिव स्थेयमिति चेत्
विचेयं चिन्तानां प्रथममिह मूलं स्थितिपदम् ।
अयुक्तः स्थातुं चेच्छिशुरनुपलब्धध्रुवगतिः
किमद्रेरारोहे त्वरितगमने वा प्रयतताम् ॥७॥

7. Are we then to rest like morons? No, the foothold, the root of these thinkings must be searched for first. If an infant, unfit to stand, has (therefore)

not got the gait firm and steady, how can he attempt at climbing the hill or running fast?

Does it then mean that we are to cease from thinking, voluntarily forfeit the special faculty developed in man and regress to the level of an automaton or an unthinking animal? And if we do so, where would we be? Is it not out of these mental activities in various fields that the best part of man the thinker has sprung up? The workings of the mind are the very things that hold man at the top of creation and in desisting from them we shall cease to be men. Are we expected to do that? No, says the author. We are not called upon to eliminate the mind in its proper role. On the other hand, we are asked to find the true basis on which alone the mind is intended to function. The thoughts are not the mind itself at its base, in its essence. They are rather the products of the mind-activity. But the seat of the mind *in actu* is to be found in the mind *in situ* and it is this radical background that holds, and against which pass the thought-movements, that is to be searched for and got at to get a true measure of the activities of the mind. "The mind is essentially calm in its pure nature" and to evaluate correctly and regulate our thoughts we must first get at the very base on which they stand, to get into the Quiet at the back of the mind which alone could give the right perspective and prepare the ground for the fuller light to guide the mind in action. Until that is done, to busy with the mind and run with its flights is as dangerous and foolish as it is for an infant who has

not yet found his feet firm to attempt a run or climb the hill.

मनोराज्ये प्राज्ये विहरतु जनस्तर्कचतुरो
निराधारं भारं वहतु ममतोद्वाहनिपुणः ।
निराशेऽप्याकाशे भजतु कमलं वा मधुकरो
वयं तूष्णींभावे ध्रुवपदगतैः स्याम कृतिनः ॥८॥

8. Let him sport who is clever in reasoning in the plentiful arena of the mind's domain; let him who is skilled in bearing the load of the 'mine' carry the baseless burden; let the bee search for (to enjoy) the lotus in the sky without direction (or hope); (on our part) let us with firm steps in the gait, settle in the Quietude!

But human temperaments vary and each nature inclines to the line to which it is strongly attracted. There are those with special aptitude for the exercise of their mental faculties and theirs is the eidolon of the Reason. Nothing is valid until it passes the test of the mind's reasoning. Not only things proper to the realm of the Reason, but those above it are also required to be rationally processed if they are to be accepted. The domain of the mind knows no frontiers because it rotates round its own axle and to those who worship at the shrine of Reason alone, not even the existence of God can pass muster unless it can be

logically proved to be tenable. All must fit into the four corners of the reasoning mind in its fanciful flights. That is the story of Philosophy in the West and to some extent the later developments in the dialectics of Indian Philosophy. Let such, says the author, luxuriate in the never-ending expanse of the mind's vegetation. We cannot argue and convince them, for doubt and argument exist for their own sake and cannot be eliminated by mental means. We cannot convince either him who is wedded (*udvāha*) to the sense of my-ness, *mamatā* (note the appropriateness of the word *udvāha*, *mamatā* being feminine). He is so much obsessed with his own sense of importance and responsibility, his own ego, that his vision gets clouded. He identifies himself with all that properly speaking, does not belong to him; he assumes responsibilities which are either wholly unreal or never meant to be shouldered by him in the present state of his ignorance and inaptitude. It is his ego which leads him to multiply his self-created problems. Such a one is best left to himself and his brood of worries. Both the logician and the egotist can be allowed to busy themselves with their labours which ultimately come to nothing, proceeding as they do on an unreal basis in an elusive vacuum. The analogy of *gaganāravinda* is given to bring home ridiculousness of the situation. The *aravinda*, lotus grows the only in water and never in the empty spaces of the sky! Still if the bee thirsting for honey in the lotus, not knowing where to find it, goes on searching for the same in the vastness of the sky with no sense of direction (or with no reasonable hope, *āśā* means 'hope' as well as 'direction'),

what could it expect to find at the end of its labours? Nothing. Yet the bee must be allowed to go through its repetitive rounds, the logician to spin out cobwebs of his mental constructions, the egotist to solve the problems of his own making. We on our part shall learn to divest ourselves of our mental and vital (egoistic) trappings and proceed to find our poise in the Quietude that is ever at the back of our external personality. Only thus can we hope to acquire the minimum firmness and solidity in our gait on the road to Truth and cease to be carried away by the raging storms of the world of mental movement.

अलं दर्शं दर्शं विषयपटलीं बुद्बुदनिभां
अलं भावं भावं भुवनसुखदं दैवतगणम् ।
अलं कृत्वा चर्चामरसपदजालार्थजरठां
सकृत् साम्बध्यानं प्रथयति हि मौनस्य विभवम् ॥९॥

9. Enough is the seeing and seeing of the multi tude of things sensual that are like bubbles. Enough is the waiting and waiting upon the host of Gods in whose gift are the joys of the world. Enough with discussion, wordy and dry, entwining and stale. Meditation on *Sāmba* the Lord with his Shakti even once, reveals the Glory of Silence.

But how to get at the quietude?

The first requisite is to withdraw our gaze from the

objects of the senses which hold our attention fixed on to them. The multifarious and fleeting objects in the world that rise and fall, appear and disappear like bubbles, exercise a strong fascination over our senses as fodder to cattle. Our consciousness is habituated to occupy itself with this floating panorama of sense-objects. As long as it continues to be attracted and held by this spectacle it cannot turn to anything else. So enough of this distracting crowd. There is no end to it, unless we choose to end its hold on us by withdrawing our sight from it, to begin with. Enough also of this preoccupation with the cares of the world and running after joys. People invoke the aid of the higher powers, the Gods and wait on them for some miraculous interventions when they find themselves unequal to the situations they are faced with. Even when their wants are fulfilled for the time being, new wants crop up and thus they are frequently, if not perpetually, in want and hence miserable. Hence our aim must be lofty, says the poet, and the result of our endeavour enduring and worthy of the human soul that is superior to human nature. We shall not waste any more time upon austerities whose one aim is to enable ourselves to enjoy better this ignorant and half-lit and in the end disappointing life in which we are revolving. We will not waste time either in discussions, interminable wordy battles in which the mind loves to revel. These acrobatics may be satisfying to the mental vanity of man, but they help him little. On the other hand they mislead him into believing that intellectual comprehension is the be-all and end-all of man, the mental being. The mind

contents itself with abstract reasonings and conclusions whereas in fact it has hedged itself in bewildering circuits of wordy formulas. The mind goes through the same rounds again and again and its labours are pronouncedly repetitive, stale.

These are the three habits to be eschewed viz. indulgence in the fleeting procession of sense-objects, preoccupation with means and disciplines to glorify and aggrandise the little ignorant life we normally lead, and enslavement to the mechanical habits of the mind, before we can hope to come under the sway of the Silence. One cannot force and effect an entry into this Silence. It is there at the back of everything, supporting in its solidity all that exists in it and it opens out on him who has no barriers to prevent its spread. One has only to disencumber oneself and allow the Silence to settle in him. An initial gathering up of one's consciousness which is normally spread out in a thousand directions, and its release in meditation upon the Lord with his Shakti, is indicated as the easiest means of a fruitful waiting for the entry of the Silence into one's being. It may seem in the beginning a long and arduous process. But a sincere and aspiring meditative effort even once serves to prepare the necessary opening through which the Silence begins to take hold of the being.

Having thus far dwelt upon the meandering course of the mind, the futility of its labours and the necessity of release from its clamping clutches into the freer reaches of Quietude, the author indicates that meditation, worship of the Lord is the one effective means of opening into the

Silence of which quietude is the vestibule. What is this meditation? How is the Lord to be invoked and worshipped? The next verse proceeds to begin the exposition of the line of approach that forms the subject-matter of the Theme—the Sadhana.

इदं नः पूर्वाङ्गं परमपुरुषाराधनविधे-
स्तवेदं नास्माकं निखिलमिति नाथोऽसि जगताम् ।
अतः सिद्धिः साध्ये महति करणे वाऽप्यणुनि वा
महाशक्तायत्ता वयमिह तु जोषं सभजनाः ॥१०॥

10. This is the prime and initial part of our line of the Supreme's worship: "All this is Thine, not ours; Thou art the proprietor of the worlds." Success, then, in the achievement—great or small be the instrument—rests with the Lord of Supreme Power; we here on our part keep to the Stillness in adoration.

That there are many disciplines for Godward approach is well known. Apart from the esoteric disciplines of Mysticism all over the world, there are the traditional lines of Yoga in India, each with a different basis of approach, process of working and different stress of realisation, though the broad goal of all is the same viz. union with the Divine. Each of them has its own steps or *padas* to be

passed through one after the other. And this Sadhana, this line of approach proper to the Truth of God and all existence as envisaged here has also its characteristic limbs, of which the primary and the initial part, the *pūrva-anga*, is described in this verse. It lies in a sincere, deep feeling shaping a radical and active attitude on the part of the seeker that all verily belongs to the Supreme One, the Lord, nothing belongs to man and that He the Divine is the world's Owner and lodger in many souls and forms of being. This is a truth of life, of creation itself which it is imperative to perceive and incumbent on every seeker to feel first in the heart or intellectually comprehend and then to make of it a living knowledge and ruling principle of his life. Man, in his ignorance, claims to own and enjoy as much of the universe as he can. But what after all is this man? He is "a composite of material elements constituting the physical body which is a portion and product of the physical universe with life and its activities as well as mind moving round the ego-centric individual existence. Just as the gross body derives its existence from the physical universe, so also individual life in the body belongs to the world of Life and is a canalised unit flowing from it; the same is true with the individual mind also as that is but a portion of the universal Mind. If, then, we look at our bodily existence along with the activities of life and mind in this larger manner it will be easy to find that we wrongly identify ourselves with what are not ourselves but what really are part and parcel of universal Matter, universal Life and universal Mind." (*Lights on the Upanishads* by Sri Kapali Sastry)

And the universal Life, Mind and Matter are, to use the potent phrase of the Upanishad, the Lord himself *abroad*, the Supreme in extension or manifestation. All is He, all is His. He the Lord pervading is the warp and woof of the peoples, *sa otaḥ protaśca vibhuḥ prajāsu* (White Yajurveda 32. 8)

It is not enough that this knowledge forms part, even an important part, of the intellectual make-up of the individual. It should be a living faith of the soul, a kind of light at the centre illuminating every corner of his being in all its activities. All must be governed by this fundamental perception. Once this attitude is firmly established, important consequences ensue. The seeker, now that he recognises the Supreme as the Lord of all, the Dispenser of all, comes to see that even success in his effort does not depend upon his personal exertion alone but upon the Will of the Lord. He has only to offer himself entirely to the Will of the Lord whatever it be. He has no need to lament over his possible or impossible failings, for it is not his effort that is going to decide the success or failure even as it is not the vaunted strength of the puny individual that really settles the matter. It is ultimately the Lord, the Master of Strength who decides and gets his will executed through whatever instrument he chooses—be it intrinsically great or small, for the strength that effects is the Lord's and not the seeker's, who is but an instrument. Gathered in this unshakable faith and knowledge, we keep ourselves still in the silence, in adoration of the Lord, for only so can the Lord's will and strength find unobstructed passage in us.

अभङ्गे पूर्वाङ्गे निभृतभुवि निश्शब्दकलिते
प्रबुद्धे सन्नद्धे ज्वलनसदने मौनगहने ।
हसन्नेत्रे वक्त्रे स्फुरति सति दैवस्य लसिते
जगद्राज्यं पूज्यं भवति जगदीशस्य भवनम् ॥११॥

11. With this prime part without break, in the still and lonely land, in the abode of the Flame set in silence, awakened and intact, profound without noise, with the Divine's play shining in one's face with blooming eyes, this world's kingdom becomes adorable, as the home of the World's Lord.

When this condition is well set, that is, when the whole being of the seeker recognises the overlordship of the Supreme and opens out in a settled poise of utter surrender to His will, the world around begins to appear to him in a different hue. It is no more the multitudes of creatures with their restless clamour that dominate the scene. It is the all-pervading presence of the One, the ineffable Silence that invites him wherever he turns. Within himself, the clang and rush of effort, responsibility and care die out, and there is a certain release in the consciousness retiring into the inner recesses of quietude. Man awakens to deeper strata of being where there is a happy silence, where he begins to feel that there is his true centre. And in the silent chamber of the heart he discovers that flame of aspiration towards

the Divine which has been so long lying latent, slumbering, but now under conditions more congenial to its rise, has got well-kindled, awakened and leaps up to a growing flame. Silence in the mind and life-parts is the most indispensable condition for this flame to be increasingly active. The flame is smothered in the enveloping smoke of desires, passions and restless movements. It gets dissipated, interrupted and that is why periods of intense aspiration in the seeker are not continual, they are often intermittent. But under the new conditions the flame is steady, 'intact', and warms up and lights the entire corridors of the the being which is now increasingly free from the turmoil of the usual activities and is filled with a profound silence. The play of the Divine is already at work in the seeker, it exudes an irrepressible cheer, a current of constant joy—since that is its inalienable nature—which expresses itself in the brightness of the visage, the blooming of the eye. The eye is the window in the physical frame for the soul, and the delectation of the soul is perceptible in the lustre of the eye. It is then that the expanse of the world appears differently. It presents itself in its true role as the habitation of the Supreme Lord and for that reason adorable and cherishable. The seeker is set in the right frame to gain a proper and truer perspective and the world is seen by him not as a mirage or an impediment to be done away with, but as a sacred dwelling place of the Lord and as such claiming particular attention from those who seek to serve Him.

अविश्रान्ते स्वान्ते भुवनपतिसक्तिर्न नियता
प्रसुप्तान्तर्ज्वाले हृदयभवने दग्धमखिलम् ।
असन्मोदे भेदे सकलमधितिष्ठत्यपि जगत्
कथं पश्येज्जन्तुः परममहसो मन्दिरमिदम् ॥१२॥

12. When the mind is without repose, contact with the World's Master is not settled (or constant). When the inner flame in the heart's mansion is fast asleep, all is accursed (lit. done to ashes). And, while a joyless difference dominates the entire world, how can the creature see in it the mansion of the Supreme Splendour?

Obviously this realisation could not be expected in the normal conditions under which man is obliged to live. His mind is restless, busy with fleeting impressions and objects and this preoccupation prevents whatever contact with the Divine one may have from being constant and active. The perversive movement of the mind interrupts its continuance. When the fire of godward aspiration is 'asleep', i.e. latent, there is really no savour in life. All is dry and dull with nothing to enthuse the inner self of man. The soul of man is happy only when it progresses, and is allowed to progress. The awakening and the rise of the Flame within is at once the impelling force and testifying witness to the progress that is being forged and this consciousness suffuses the entire being with happiness. But when the

fire lies unkindled and the soul is morose, it feels betrayed by the rest of the being which is either not ready or not willing to help it in its onward journey. No spiritual progress could be expected under such adverse conditions.

Again, normally creatures and forms are separate and separated and not merely physically but in consciousness also. They always meet in friction. Contact among the diverse forms and beings with which the world teems is mostly of a disharmonious kind; each looks to its own growth and well-being and impinges upon the other only with a view to its self-aggrandisement. A continual state of war thus seems to govern the relations of individual beings in creation. Even mutual arrangements for association etc. are a *pis aller*, their sole function being a promotion of a more efficient growth of the constituent individual units. This fact of multiplicity in creation—a multiplicity apparently devoid of any mutuality and harmony but marked by a rigid exclusiveness on the part of each—is what strikes the average mind. Unable to pierce through this apparent multiplicity into the truth of Oneness underlying it, the mind sees the world as a mere conglomeration of so many diverse, disharmonious formations. How could it see in it the abode of the Splendour that is Divine?

ततः स्वान्तं शान्तं कथमपि भवेत् सिद्धमनिशं
शुचिज्वाला नित्या परमपदकाङ्क्षा च हृदये ।
अखण्डार्था दृष्टिर्विषयधिषणावृत्तिषु जयेत्
सति श्रीसान्निध्ये त्रिभुवनगुरोः किं न सुलभम् ॥१३॥

13. Therefore, always the mind must somehow rest in perfect quietude; the pure flame in the heart, the aspiration towards the highest step must be constant; in the midst of thoughts wedded to worldly objects, the indivisible vision must reign supreme. In the august Presence of the Father of the triune-world what is not possible?

Therefore, says the author, the very first requisite in the Sadhana is to somehow quiet the outgoing and agitative mind. But can the mind be quieted at all? Is it not its nature to be active with thoughts which are its very warp and woof? It is not. The mind "is not a jumble of feelings and passions, desires and sensations, or even a sheer repertory of thoughts. It is, certainly, an instrument of thought and expression; but in its true part it is a calm, transparent, reflecting apparatus receiving and transmitting truths and true ideas shaping them into thought-forms, translating them into its own terms. When it reflects the desires, passions and other activities of the lower life, they are mentalised, and are reflex actions which do not really form part of the true character and function of the mind. That is why some later Upanishads speak of mind being twofold: the one is higher, *param* and pure, *śuddham*, naturally calm; the other is the lower, *aparam*, and impure, *aśuddham*, soiling the mirror of mind with desires etc. screening its natural purity and quietude from being effective. When we consider the question of mind which is essentially

calm in its pure nature, we can well appreciate the yogic disciplines that lay stress on the necessity of stilling the mind which would be an impossibility but for the presence of a natural calm in some essential part of mind itself. Incidentally we may remark that this truth of yogic psychology is a standing challenge to some of the popular theories of modern science that hold that an uninterrupted flow of thoughts is an essential characteristic of mind, which is the very opposite of quietude. Needless to say that this is not valid in the light of yogic experience." Also, "a settled quiet in the mind, a certain poise and peaceful disposition of the being, aloof from the common distractions of life and its interests...is *śānti* as a condition of the *upāsanā*. This is so, because the worship which implies concentration on what is worshipped would not be possible in the face of other objects of interest overpowering the mind with their claim to be enshrined in the quietude and disturbing the poise of the being." That done, care must be taken to nourish the flame of aspiration in the heart. It is already awake, for without some such awakening, no one is impelled to turn to the life of the Spirit. What is wanted is a sedulous nourishing of this tender plant of the soul, a fostering of the atmosphere in which it would grow and reach out to the most external parts of man. That is to say, a rigorous exclusion from one's movements, of the body, mind and life, of all that is opposed to the growth of the Aspiration and a cultivation of such things as are favourable to its fruition viz. mental refinement, emotive *catharsis*, dedicated service etc., are the immediate desideratum. Again it should

be a constant endeavour to develop and normalise the 'indivisible vision'—the vision or outlook which meets the Vast, the supreme One everywhere, the partless One in all, amidst all thoughts and movements going forth to deal with the contacts of the world. The vision of the whole must be dominant; mental and other activities which have to be of practical necessity several and distinctive when they deal with diverse sense-objects, have yet to be carried out with the background of and governed by this whole-souled vision, which sees the *akhaṇḍa*, the infinite vast everywhere.

To quiet the mind, to keep the inner flame of aspiration constantly burning, to normalise and enthrone the indivisible vision as the guiding factor in all one's activities, is not easy for human effort. In fact each of these is a Sadhana by itself and should normally take up the greater part of man's effort. But, reminds the author, here we are not proceeding on our own strength. We have sought and are waiting upon the Lord of the three worlds. And in his presence nothing is difficult. His presence is august, happy, fulfilling; he is the supreme creator and nothing is outside his power to effect.

अहोरात्रध्यानाद्बहुलशरदः कर्मचरणात्
तपोभिः कृच्छ्रैर्वा निजसमयधर्मानुसरणात् ।
जपैर्वा मन्त्राणां व्रतविधिशतैर्नामभजनात्
नरः प्राप्नोत्येव श्रमहरबलं किञ्चन फलम् ॥१४॥

14. By meditation day and night, by performance of holy rites, by hard penances, from observing closely the rules of one's own Faith, or by silent repetition of sacred syllables, by hundreds of vows of discipline, by invocation of the Name, man certainly obtains some result strength-giving, that removes the fatigue.

Not that human effort can achieve nothing. Individual effort has a place and an important place too in spiritual life as in the life ordinary. 'There is no success for one inactive', *nāsti siddhiḥ akarmaṇaḥ* (Mahabharata Shantiparva, 10.26). The epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata, the Puranas and other literature bearing upon the spiritual and cultural history of this land are full of narrations of the indefatigable efforts on the part of seekers of God. And these exertions do bring out results commensurate with the will and sincerity put behind them. Thus for instance, they meditate in an intense manner day and night with a view to merge themselves in the object of meditation in due course. Meditation, with or without concentration as a part of it, gradually leads to the turning and converging of the consciousness in the desired object and at its highest effects a return of the consciousness to its peak in trance. Then there are holy rites like the Yajna, the various *vratas*, by a faithful performance of which the individual hopes to equip himself with the necessary fitness for the consummate gifts of the Gods; hard penances, moderation in or

periodical denial of food, sleep etc. are familiar to most of us as parts of such disciplines. Scrupulous adherence to the way of life prescribed, the *dharma* of one's own faith, is considered to be another means. There is also the famous Mantra-sadhana. There is the discipline of vows which puts the human system through a series of regulations of self-denial and seeks to purify and equip the being for the favour of the Almighty. Last, there is the simple but wonderfully effective mode of the Invocation of the Name of the Lord, *nāmasmaraṇa*. The very syllable of the Name possesses a power and strength which yield themselves to the seeker in the process of the repetition; his whole being gets charged as it were with the vibration of the Name-Power. The Name of God, the Name of the Guru when repeated with faith opens out some channel of communication to the Invoked; the Name is an intimate part of the Person. The repetition of the Name sets up an atmosphere around the being of the seeker in which everything else but the thought of Him whose name is called dwindles, enveloping him with a growing sense of an immense supremacy of the Lord and in this receptive condition the response from the Invoked cannot fail to be effective.

All these are truly efficacious means. Each one of them gives some result and the seeker is certainly a gainer and does see some benefit accruing to him. But the question is, could not more be achieved with a ray of the Lord's Grace answering to the aspiration and effort of the human soul? And could the difficult aim of this particular Sadhana, the most important part of which is the conquest

of Matter by the Light of the Spirit, be accomplished by these endeavours? The next verse gives the answer.

प्रयासैर्मर्त्यानाममृतगुरुदृक्पातवियुतै-
रियं सिद्धिर्न स्याद् जडविजयसाम्राज्यपरमा ।
यतः शान्तिः सिद्धा भवति सहजा साऽप्यनलसा
घने शक्तिः प्राज्ञा वपुषि परिपाकं च तनुते ॥१५॥

15. This success where the sovereign sway of the conquest of Matter is supreme is not possible by the toils of mortals without the glance of the Immortal Guru—the success whence the Peace self-born becomes settled and then too, not dull; and a self-aware Force spreads bearing fruit (fruit-bearing play) in the body dense.

Personal effort, while indispensable, does not achieve decisive results without the help of Guru or God in any line of spiritual life. "All the personal exertions in the Sadhana with their fruits, do not arrive at the core of realisation, or soar to the highest summit. One can go, with the means at his disposal won by Sadhana, deep within towards the innermost apartment of the Self, and knock and knock, but the door of the chamber is still closed; he has to wait and watch until the door opens at the will of the Atman who is the revealer. Nowhere in the Upanishads where instructions of the Sadhanas are

given, we find that the realisation is the fruit of the personal effort alone. These disciplines and methods of approach prepare the journey towards the goal and make one fit for the consummation. Even when an exclusive choice is made for realising the Self, it is the Self that reveals its own body to the seeker—*tasya eṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanūm svām*—and not that the seeker storms the gate and discovers the Self by the merit of his own Sadhana." For decisive steps in the inner life, the active support and intervention of the Guru is indispensable. And in a Sadhana of this kind which has set for itself a new and hitherto unattempted goal, progress, much less success, is inconceivable without the guidance, help and lead of its pathfinder—the Immortal Guru, immortal because he embodies the immortal Light which is at the head of this Yoga of Nature. The aim of this Sadhana is different from that of other Yogas where the processes, the paths and the goal are more or less fixed, standardised in traditional disciplines. A complete conquest of the domain of dense matter by the Light of the Divine, a deliverance of the body from thraldom to the forces of ignorance and inconscience imbedded in matter into the free and transforming light of the highest Spirit is the central aim of this Sadhana. A consistent endeavour to release the soul from the bonds of un-awareness and develop an increasing degree of consciousness is noticeable in the strivings of Nature; to complete this process is the object of this Yoga and hence it is also described as the Yoga of Nature; a progressive deepening and heightening of one's consciousness leading

to a spiritualisation of the various parts of the being, a realisation of the inner Divine is the fundamental basis of the process which is worked out mainly by the Shakti of the Master. The evocation and establishment of the next higher principle in the scale of evolution beyond Mind viz. Vijnana in man is the crucial step by which the conquest and transformation of Matter is sought to be made possible. For only so can it be done. "This higher principle is immediately and directly divine in its nature and functioning; it is spiritual, higher than the mind which is the highest principle that has been so far organised for functioning on earth." "It is far above the Mind and therefore far above the Ignorance, is self-luminous, intimately spiritual, directly divine in its domain, in knowledge, strength and force of movement and action. It is a Light." It is the direct action of this Light that alone could successfully tackle the obstinate inertia of Matter and to set it working here on earth, in man, is the aim and goal of this Sadhana. Obviously no human effort could achieve it. Only the grace of the Guru, the discoverer of the path, Sri Aurobindo, can enable the seeker to open himself more and more to the Shakti whose power it is to work out and bestow the *siddhi*, success. As the Sadhana progresses in its assured course of success, notable results follow. The Peace from the heights is consciously felt infiltrating into the texture of one's being. It is constantly experienced as coursing through the body and Peace becomes as constant and as natural as the feeling of the physical body. In this settled Peace the individual finds the meeting ground to embrace the Vaster universe

around. And this Peace is not inactive or a lifeless something, *analasa*, as we are apt to imagine. It is ceaselessly wakeful, not dull. The peace is intensely fruitful and prepares and disposes the body to a citadel of strength rendering it capable of responding spontaneously in a divine way to all outside contacts. A Force is at work effecting the Sadhana in the being. It is not a mechanical or half-lit force, but a Shakti that is knowing, self-aware, *prājnā*, that is taking up every part of the being and works upon it by way of purification, subtilisation and integration with other parts so as to render the whole ready to bear the fruit. The material base, the physical body of man is constituted of dense matter which in its very nature is inert, ignorant and is opposed to the entry of light which would eliminate its very nature. But this self-aware force ceaselessly presses upon it, from above, from below, from within and prepares it, renders it suitable for 'bearing fruit' i.e. for yielding the result that is aimed at.

प्रसादस्यावासे भवति हृदये नः पशुपते-
र्मुधाजल्पं मुक्त्वा विरमति मनो निर्मलतले ।
समाक्रामत्यन्तर्बहिरपि स भूमाऽप्यनवधि-
र्जगद्रिक्ते चित्ते जयति जगदीशस्य महिमा ॥१६॥

16. When our heart becomes the dwelling place of God's grace (lit. Pashupati, the Lord of beings), the mind forsaking its prattle futile ceases to be

and rests on the grounds of purity; the boundless Vast overpowers (and fills) the inside and the outside as well; and in the mind the world vacates, the Greatness of the world's Lord reigns supreme.

When the heart becomes the tabernacle of the Grace of the Lord, the whole being is filled with a living sense of His Presence and the restless mind under pressure of this all-round silence gives up its little noises, its useless prattlings and settles down to what is its native base—where all is clear, reflecting and spotless, pure and transparent and finds there its natural poise. The Vast, the consciousness of the Infinite which is unrolling itself in the being, spreads out and the seeker sees the same Vast, whether he looks within himself or outside his body. Thus the greatness and glory of the Lord fills up the spaces of the mind which have been emptied of the myriad crowded objects of the world. The cup needs to be emptied before it is filled and hence to clear the mind of all its frothy content is the *sine qua non* for making of it a temple for the Supreme presence.

अयं च प्रारम्भो गुरुचरणयोगेश्वरकृपा-
कटाक्षस्य श्रीमान् नवभुवननिर्मातुरतुलः ।
अयं व्याप्तद्योतो दिशि दिशि विसर्पन् दिनमणे-
र्मयूखानां दूरादुदयगिरिभाजामरुणिमा ॥१७॥

17. This is the peerless start, splendorous, of the compassionate side-long look of the Guru

adorable, the Lord of the Yoga, the builder of the new world. This is the Dawn's dusky glow with its pervasive lustre, gliding in all quarters of the sky,—the dawn's dusky glow of the rays of the Sun from afar on the Udaya hill (where the sun rises).

This is the commencement of the Sadhana proper—a silent mind functioning in its proper role of a reflecting and transparent surface, an active Peace beginning to course through the being and the self-aware Shakti of the Lord preparing the system for bearing fruit. It is the first glowing result of the compassionate glance of the Guru, the path-finder and perfector of this path of Purna Yoga which is the sole means for building up a newer and a fuller world, for the building of a world in which knowledge and light shall be the ruling principle instead of ignorance and darkness as in the present. This auspicious advent of the Light heralded by these happy realisations growing from all sides is like the dusky glow of the early dawn whose onsetting light increasingly pervades the quarters of the skies. Once it is begun, the steady growth and spread and the full bright manifestation above the horizon is inevitable. This gliding of the lustre of the rays of the rising Sun of Truth is aptly compared to the glow of the morning sun on mount Udaya. For in the Vedic symbolism, the physical sun stands for the supreme Sun of spiritual Truth, the supramental Light of which the solar body is the glorious image and symbol. The break of the dawn is on the highest peak of the hill as of the being of man. The Sun is not yet; it is only the

far-off glow of the shooting rays of the rising sun—the Light of supreme Truth.

नवं चक्षुः श्रोत्रं नवमपि मनो नूतनमतं
नवं दृश्यं श्रव्यं नवमपि च धीगोचरगतम् ।
समानं भूमानं सकलमपि वस्तु प्रथयति
प्रभोर्वीक्षाभासः कति कति न चित्राणि दधते ॥१८॥

18. Fresh is the eye, fresh the ear, fresh also is the mind with outlook (lit. thought) new. Fresh is the object seen, fresh what is audible, and fresh also whatever strikes the understanding. Everything celebrates the Plenum, the Vast, that is equal (in all). How many, how many the wonders the radiances of the Lord's glance hold aloft?

That is the Dawn of the Divine consciousness for the Yogin which brings in its wake certain indubitable results manifest in the life of the blessed individual. Such a one finds he has a new sight. He no more sees in the way he was accustomed to. Things no more impinge upon his eye as before. He is no longer deceived or misled by appearances. His eye penetrates them and seizes on the truth behind each appearance. His hearing undergoes a similar change. It is no more given to be caught in the discords and disharmonies in the world; it rather discovers and listens to the note of accord and harmony amidst the bewildering multi-

tude of things in the world. Likewise the mind gets new-formed, its outlook is re-fashioned and it fronts its objects with a totally new basis of approach. It does not look at things piece by piece, it is impelled to take a more comprehensive and total view in its contact with them. It recognises the constitutional limitations inherent in its own make-up and submits to the lead and workings of higher faculties above the mind and learns to function with this higher light and power for guidance. The effect of this change is not confined to the subjective being and its incline to a static poise; it extends to the external also. It extends to the senses, to the object that is seen, the thing that is heard and that which confronts the understanding—all these acquire a new significance. The entire objective world presents itself in a new apparel, with a fresh meaning. For hitherto it was what the senses reported it to be. It was on the basis of impressions formed by the senses that the world was judged and acted upon. But 'the senses are liars.' They mistake and misrepresent what they contact. But now with the change in the mode of functioning of the senses the outer world also undergoes a corresponding change. Everything in the universe points to the Vast—the Bhuma. *Bhūmā*, the Plenum in the Upanishad means the Brahman itself, the Supreme Reality. And every little object, every finite brings into bold relief the Infinite against the background of which it springs into existence to his eye. The tiny sing the odyssey of the Great One. Each of the Many reveals and celebrates the underlying Unity of the One that is equal in all. There is, indeed, no end to these and other

wonders held and released by the dynamic brilliances of the Lord's glance.

दिवं नादेनोर्वीमपि गगनमापूर्य विमलं
महामौने गानं विशति निभृतं कर्णकुहरम् ।
अपि ज्योतिर्लीलां कलयति किमप्यद्भुतनये
मनश्शून्ये मान्ये प्रचलति विभोर्योगविभवे ॥१९॥

19. As the revealing splendour of the Lord's Yoga,—an art of Marvel, adored and empty of mind, paces forth, the music in the superb Silence enters the cavity of the ear filling with sound heaven and earth and the spaces of the limpid sky; and something arranges the play of the Light.

The mind is relegated to its proper role. It has given up its arrogant claim to excercise the functions that more properly belong to a higher faculty, the higher *buddhi* and is well settled in its natural poise. In such a being, freed from the whirlpool of mental currents, the splendour of the Lord's Yoga paces forth more and more freely, disseminating its rays, lighting up every nook and corner, revealing all the inside with its strengths and imperfections to the observant eye for the necessary attention and action; the ways of its movement, the modes of its operation are beyond the common conception of the human mind; it carries itself with the ease and grace of a perfected art and

effects and fulfils with the skill and dynamis of the Great Wonder. Out of the profound depths of the Silence there emerges a music, *nāda*, the mystical voice, not the music of the earth but the enchanting music of the spheres overtopping the physical universe. The vibrations of this heavenly rhythm gently steal into the atmosphere of the seeker, they fill his serene ears with their sweet cadences and envelope in their harmony all around, the earth, the heaven, the transparent spaces of the sky whose air he breathes. Here is the noiseless sound, the voice of the Silence, a sure indication of the working of the Supreme power which is opening up all the inner centres of the being to the subtler planes around and above.

And as the Yoga-Force progresses in its sway the Light at its head begins to manifest, to operate more and more visibly. Then commences the play of Light which is seen even by the outer eye but in its subtler functioning.

परिच्छिन्नं देशं प्रमितुमथवा कालकलनां
विविक्तार्थान् भावान् पृथगिह विनिर्णेतुमथवा ।
प्रयासेनैवासौ प्रभवति कृती चिन्मयवपुः
कृपावीक्षा यस्मिन् विलसति विभोर्योगभरिता ॥२०॥

20. Or, the blessed being, a bodied consciousness, is able, only with effort, to recognise the bounded space or time's course or to determine severally objects of distinct import—he (the blessed being)

in whom sports the Lord's gracious glance laden with Yoga.

He is truly blessed in whom sports this gracious glance of the Master, the all-effecting look laden with the force of Yoga. As the Sadhana progresses in the manner sketched above, he grows out of the limits of the limited body-consciousness, his feeling of identity with the physical body ceases to be and he comes to grow more and more in identity with the nature of the Consciousness that is unveiling itself in him and becomes as it were 'a bodied consciousness' i.e. the consciousness itself massed in form. He is one with the Consciousness that is infinite in nature, he is just one centre of it. That being the fact of his existence, the distinctions of Time and Space lose their rigidities to him. All is one Extension of the Infinite Consciousness, even as time is Eternity in duration. The fact of the endless variety of forms loses its urgency for him as he only sees the One amidst All. And yet, when, as a measure of practical convenience, in his dealings with the world, he recognises the bounds of Space and the duration of Time and deals with the distinct objects as if they were really exclusive and independent of each other, he does so with a certain strain, or with some effort. He has to limit his vision, cabin his expansive consciousness to suit the exigencies of this ignorant world. To live in timeless, spaceless Consciousness is for him natural now; to come down to the space-time existence, he has to manage, hence 'with effort' etc. in the text.

प्रभुर्योगेशानः क्वचिदमरसाम्राज्यपदवी-
मनाके लोकेऽस्मिन् प्रथयति निजे योगिनि जने ।
क्वचिद्योगासक्तं विजनरतिमत्तेन्द्रियजडं
जगन्मान्यश्रेयोविविधविधिदक्षं वितनुते ॥२१॥

21. The Master, Yoga's lord, at times, reveals in the Yogin who is his own, the way to the Empire of the Gods on this Earth which is no Heaven. Or, on occasions, the Yogin who is attached to Yoga and dull in his senses drunk with the joy of solitude—such a one, the Lord turns into one skilled in various ways for the work of the world's weal that is estimable.

Nothing is impossible for the Master of the Yoga. For the chosen soul in whom he, the Lord of the Yoga, has set working his Yoga-power, the miracles that make their appearance are without number. To such a one, at times, mortal though he is and lives on this earth given to suffering and death, the Master reveals the sure path to the *sāmrājya*, the empire, of the Gods. This kingdom of the immortals with all that it connotes viz. the rule of absolute Knowledge, Power and Delight and Immortality, is not set before the seeker as a haven of escape, as something for the future for which one has to equip himself. The way to realise that beatific state while living in this world itself, to achieve immortality while living in the mortal frame, is what is revealed to him. To achieve the apparently impossible,—

namely, to manifest the truth, light and immortality under conditions which are their very opposite, the conditions of falsehood, darkness and death—is shown to be feasible and the way to do it is revealed to him. Or, the Lord chooses one who is unshakeably attached to Yoga, for a different work. He is so tenaciously attached to it that he would think of nothing else. His being is so much engrossed in the joy of solitude that the outgoing senses have lost their motor-power to function in the normal way; he cannot engage in any other activity barring that of waiting on the Yoga-power at work. To the outside world, such a one is as good as dead, he does nothing, for he cannot. And even him, the Lord by his Shakti transforms into a skilful, perfect worker, an expert in working out the weal of the world. He engages himself in the work that is his part with all his enlightenment and uplifted personality; and divinely inspired, he effects the good, the *kalyāṇa*, the *śreyas*, of the world of fellow-beings. He is able to do that much more effectively and completely than others because he has found the true basis of activity, he is open to the right light above and the right impulsion within and he has learnt to make himself just a channel for the never-failing and all-knowing Shakti which is the true doer.

जनो जोषंभावं स्मरति न जगद्विस्मरति वा
न शक्तिं निद्राणां वपुषि भजते कुण्डलवतीम् ।
बलात् काचिच्छक्तिस्तनुकरणमाविश्य दधती
नये मोहोन्माथे जयति बहुलीलां विदधती ॥२२॥

22. Being calm, one does not think of the world, nor forget it; nor does he wait upon the coiled Power in the body—Kundalini. Yet some Force (*Shakti*) forcibly possesses and holds the body and the instruments, instituting a manifold play in the art (of Yoga) that dispels delusion.

He is still. He is fixed in the silence that settles on him. He no longer thinks of the world. The world around is no longer an incubus on the mind. But he does not forget it either. He is aware of the world, but is not preoccupied with it; he deals with it but is not lost in it. In a word he is in the world but not of it. He does not initiate his own movements in Sadhana, claiming for himself the wisdom of the Power at work. He does not busy himself with the awakening of the latent and coiled Power in his system—the Kundalini Shakti—the awakening and release of which is an important part in some disciplines, for this Shakti when it releases itself from the coils and rises towards the *Sahasrāra*, the subtler centre in and above the head, is known to effect wonders in carrying the Sadhaka to pinnacles of realisation. But the seeker here does not cultivate it. He rests in silence, waits in adoration upon the Will of the Lord to do what He chooses—and He indeed knows what is the best and most needful at the moment.

And he does not wait in vain. Without any effort on his part, some Force, some Shakti takes firm possession of his body, holds it and its limbs, and commences its activity

which is manifold in its play, diverse in its modes and irresistible in its functioning. This Shakti with the Light that goes with it, increasingly subjects all the parts of one's being to its uplifting influence with its pressure of elimination that purifies and steadily dispels the delusion to which the human being is heir. In this Sadhana the relentless task of displacing ignorance and delusion with a growing illumination is done not by the laborious process of mental discrimination and analysis but by the Power of Yoga which does it with the finesse of an artist.

उदग्रायाः सीम्नः श्वसितनिभमायाति किमपि
क्षणात् कोऽपि प्रादुर्भवति सुभगः सन्निधिरपि ।
विनिद्रं च ज्योतिर्विनयनपटु प्राणिति पुरो
विनिश्चेष्टा कापि स्थितिरखिलमङ्गं निविशते ।।२३।।

23. From the high regions something comes down like a breath of life; in an instant a happy Presence manifests itself. The Light clever in leading breathes in front; a state of utter stillness enters all the body's limbs.

Again, as the Yoga-force is at work in oneself, now with impetuosity, now with measured gait, throwing open subtler passages and centres within, enlarging the boundaries of consciousness on the various levels of the being, the earthly encasement of the person gradually ceases to limit him to the physical body. One becomes increasingly aware of the

rising tiers of consciousness, like the plateaus of the hill with which indeed the ancient mystics of the Vedas compared Cosmic existence. Something wafts itself down from the heights like a fresh breath of life. It does not partake of the nature of hot air of the plains of ordinary human life. Light as a breath, it is something different and carries with it an engaging freshness and strength that exhilarates. And as if on the wings of it there presents itself a happy Presence —one becomes aware of a *sānnidhya*, a presence which is auspicious, which exudes happiness and cheer. The Presence is a solid fact felt with certitude, overriding all conditions unfavourable to its manifestation, radiating a happy atmosphere all around. Presence of what? It is undoubtedly the revealing presence of the Supreme, the person of the Lord's Shakti. The Light of the Yoga-force that has guided the Sadhana hitherto, partly veiled and partly unveiled, now comes to the fore more and more overtly. It is vibrant with its own native power in the vicinity of the Presence. And lastly a condition of utter stillness, complete immobility of peace settles on the limbs of the body. Every limb and cell of the body becomes instinct with an ineffable stillness. Mark the sequence: a living breath from the most High sails down the heights and in its wake there presents itself a supreme Presence; the leading Light of the Yoga Power reveals itself more vividly and actively in its vicinity. But the realisation is not confined to the inner regions alone. The body is not left out. An intense stillness bathes the body and enters into its very cells and organs delivering them into a state of expectant Silence.

द्रढिष्ठं साधिष्ठं तुहिनकरसम्पर्कशिशिर-
द्रवद्ग्रावस्तम्भायितमखिलमङ्गं सुखमयम् ।
घनीभूतं शान्तेः किमपि वररूपं भवदिदं
तदाधारः पात्रं जडमपि वपुर्नो विजयते ॥२४॥

24. The entire body is now strong, firm with correct poise, and like a marble monument, cool (lit. the stone pillar that oozes out moisture in contact with moon's rays) and full of bliss. And this body, though material, becomes an excellent figure of Peace, made solid, a vessel and basis of Peace: it is as such victorious.

A body that is weak, restless and exposed to the attacks of forces of disease and danger can hardly be a fit receptacle for the downpour of strength and Ananda of the divine. It cannot hold these gifts and they spill out. That is why the Rishis of the past paid so much attention to the perfection of the *camasa*, the bowl, the physical body, in which the Soma juice, the sap of life, distilled was to be filled. A body is truly strong and impervious to the onslaughts of weakening forces to the extent it is in harmony with itself, in the measure of the peace and stillness that permeate the system. Considerable attention is paid to the physical side in the Sadhana by the Yoga-force as that is the basis on which the entire edifice is to be erected. The working of the Yoga Force, the ceaseless settling in layers

upon layers of peace makes the body strong and firm, perfect, harmonious. Like a marble monument, it is cool, never excited and heated; it is blissful with the joy of delight running through its veins. The marble pillar to which the body is compared for its beauty, strength and grandeur, oozes out moisture when it comes into contact with the beams of the moon; so does the body emanate peace and happiness before the Presence.

Thus does the body, constituted though it is of inert matter, gradually change into a living figure of the calm; it becomes, indeed, a solid embodiment of Quietude. And fashioned into a substantial base, *ādhār*, a fine vessel of the Peace, the body arrives at the very core of its own fulfilment.

We have here in this verse the echo and substance of what Sri Aurobindo says in *Savitri*. Here are the relevant lines to which the author draws our attention:

> "A breath comes down from a supernal air,
> A Presence is born, a guiding Light awakes,
> A stillness falls upon the instruments:
> Fixed sometimes like a marble monument,
> Stone-calm, the body is a pedestal
> Supporting a figure of eternal Peace."

इदं प्रत्यक्षं चेदनुभवपथं याति सकलं
विचारैर्निस्सारैरलमलमयुक्तैर्विमतिभिः ।
कटाक्षेऽस्मन्मातुर्विभृतभुवनक्षेम इह नः
शरण्योऽयं जीयाद् भगवदरविन्दस्य महिमा ॥२५॥

25. When this becomes evident, when all this enters the realm of experience, then away, away with discussions dry, away with minds unpoised and perverse. Victory to this Grandeur of Sri Aurobindo that is our Refuge and which has kept the world's weal to the care and trust of the Mother's side-long look.

When these realisations settle themselves and become active elements of our existence, who, asks the author, would care to occupy himself in dry-as-dust intellectual discussions described in the opening verses of the Poem? The truth of spiritual life, the depths of the soul and the fulfilling nature of the Guide's Glance, *Gurukaṭākṣa* are matters for experience and not conclusions to be arrived at after interminable rambles of the mind. Certain minds are so made that they would not admit the validity of anything unless it allows itself to be formulated in the conceptual vacuum of their making. Let us leave them severely alone. Let us hymn the greatness of Sri Aurobindo, who is our Refuge, the finder of our means of deliverance, the donor of the boon Divine; let us bow to the Bhagawan to whom the weal of the world is so dear and so urgent that he has secured it in the hold and trust of the self-effectuating compassionate side-long glance of the Shakti, the Divine Mother. The look of the universal Mother is actively directed towards immediate fulfilment in this triple world of Ignorance and once the Master has

kept the welfare and uplift of the world to its trust, that is a sure pledge of the sanction and will of the Lord which brooking no resistance is executed by Her in total redemption of the Promise.

Thus ends the Poem.

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